

# 25 Nov 2020: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### A. GS 1 Related

#### **GEOGRAPHY**

1. [T.N., Puducherry on edge as Nivar closes in](#)

### B. GS 2 Related

#### **POLITY AND GOVERNANCE**

1. [Kerala to withdraw amendment](#)
2. [Poshan Abhiyaan needs a boost: study](#)

### C. GS 3 Related

#### **SECURITY**

1. [Govt. bans 43 more apps citing threat to security](#)

#### **ECONOMY**

1. [Govt. orders 'priority' for local tenders](#)

### D. GS 4 Related

### E. Editorials

#### **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

1. [Diplomatic offensive](#)

#### **ECONOMY**

1. [Dangerous Suggestions](#)
2. [Say 'no' to corporate houses in Indian banking](#)

### F. Prelims Facts

### G. Tidbits

1. [Jail term, fine for 'unlawful' religious conversions in U.P.](#)

### H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

### I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

## A. GS 1 Related

### Category: GEOGRAPHY

#### 1. [T.N., Puducherry on edge as Nivar closes in](#)

##### Context:

Cyclone Nivar over the southwest Bay of Bengal is likely to intensify into a very severe cyclonic storm and cross the Tamil Nadu and Puducherry coasts.

##### Why are Tamil Nadu and Puducherry on 'red' alert?

- The [India Meteorological Department \(IMD\)](#) has forecast the development of a cyclone in the Southwest region of the Bay of Bengal, off the Tamil Nadu coast.
- The [National Disaster Response Force \(NDRF\)](#) is working in close coordination with district and local administrations. Awareness programmes are being conducted for all citizens.

##### Cyclone Nivar:

- Cyclone Nivar is a name proposed by Iran.
- It is the third name to be used from the new list of names for North Indian Ocean cyclones, released in 2020.
- After cyclone Gaja in 2018, this will be the second cyclone to cross Tamil Nadu in the last two years.

### **Naming Cyclones:**

- An important reason why cyclones are named is to help authorities quickly identify storms and keep a track of them because it is easier to remember cyclones by their names than remembering them using technical information like longitude and latitude.
- The earlier list of names for cyclones, formulated by meteorological departments of eight countries in 2004, was exhausted after [Amphan](#), proposed by Thailand.
- In 2018, a new panel was set up to coordinate and decide names for future cyclones.
- The names for tropical cyclones in the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea are suggested by Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Iran, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Yemen as per the formula agreed by [World Meteorological Organisation](#) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in its 27th session in 2000.
- Each of the 13 countries has proposed 13 names.
- India has proposed names such as Gati (speed), Tej (speed), Marasu (musical instrument in Tamil), Aag (fire) and Neer (water).

Read more on Tropical Cyclones covered in [29<sup>th</sup> October 2019 Comprehensive News Analysis](#).

## **B. GS 2 Related**

### **Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE**

#### **1. Kerala to withdraw amendment**

##### **Context:**

A special meeting of the Kerala Cabinet decided to request the Governor to promulgate a withdrawal ordinance to revoke the controversial executive order that sought to empower the police to prosecute persons disseminating defamatory content.

This topic has been covered in the [24<sup>th</sup> November 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis](#).

#### **2. Poshan Abhiyaan needs a boost: study**

##### **Context:**

According to a report by NITI Aayog, the Poshan Abhiyaan must be stepped up to meet the targets set by the Centre to reduce stunting, wasting and anaemia by 2022.

##### **POSHAN Abhiyaan:**

- POSHAN Abhiyaan is also known as the National Nutrition Mission.

- The term 'Poshan' in the name of the programme stands for 'Prime Minister's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nutrition'.
- It is the world's largest nutrition programme for children and mothers.
- The mission is a multi-ministerial initiative and aims at removing malnutrition from the country by 2022.
- It aims to reduce stunting and wasting by 2% a year (total 6% until 2022) among children and anaemia by 3% a year (total 9%) among children, adolescent girls and pregnant women and lactating mothers.

Read more about [POSHAN Abhiyaan](#).

#### Issues:

- More than a third of the children under five face stunting and wasting and 40% aged between one and four are anaemic.
- Over 50% of pregnant and other women were found to be anaemic, said the National Family Health Survey 4 released in 2016.
- India's targets are conservative as compared to the global targets defined by the World Health Assembly (WHA), which is a prevalence rate of 5% of stunting as opposed to India's goal of reducing stunting levels to 13.3% by 2022.
- The target of reducing prevalence levels of anaemia among pregnant women from 50.3% in 2016 to 34.4% in 2022 and among adolescent girls from 52.9% in 2016 to 39.66%, is also considered conservative.

#### Way forward:

- NITI Aayog's third progress report on the Nutrition Mission highlights the need to graduate to a POSHAN-plus strategy.
- Its suggests continued strengthening of the four pillars of the Abhiyaan and a renewed focus on other social determinants in addition to addressing the governance challenges of National Health Mission (NHM)/[Integrated Child Development Service \(ICDS\) scheme](#) delivery mechanisms.
- The report calls for a need to lay as much emphasis on complementary feeding as it does on breastfeeding, which it points out can help avert 60% of the total stunting cases in India.

#### Note:

The review report drafted in March 2020 does not factor worsening poverty and hunger levels owing to COVID-19, which is expected to dent strides made since 2018 to achieve nutritional targets.

## C. GS 3 Related

### Category: SECURITY

#### 1. Govt. bans 43 more apps citing threat to security

#### Context:

The government has blocked 43 more mobile apps, including major Chinese ones citing threat to national security, integrity and sovereignty.

**Details:**

- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) issued an order under Section 69A of the [Information Technology Act](#) blocking access to 43 mobile apps.
- It stated that the action was taken based on inputs that these apps were engaging in activities which are prejudicial to the sovereignty and integrity of India, defence of India, security of the state and public order.
- It is based on the comprehensive reports received from the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Center, Ministry of Home Affairs.

**Note:**

Earlier, in June, the government had blocked access to 59 apps ranging from e-commerce to gaming, social media, browsers, instant messaging and file sharing. In September, another 118 apps were banned.

Read more on this topic covered in [2<sup>nd</sup> July 2020](#), [5<sup>th</sup> July 2020](#) and [14<sup>th</sup> Sep 2020](#) CNA.

**Category: ECONOMY****1. Govt. orders 'priority' for local tenders****Context:**

The government has tightened its procurement norms to make it tougher for ministries to pursue global tenders for contracts worth up to ₹200 crore.

**Background:**

- Under the [Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan](#), the government had barred departments from issuing global tenders for contracts worth ₹200 crore or less.
- The General Financial Rules were amended to disallow global tender enquiries in such procurement of goods and services, with an eye on boosting the prospects of domestic micro, small and medium enterprises.
- Any ministry seeking an exemption to the norm, in order to call for a global tender enquiry, is required to seek the Cabinet Secretariat's prior nod.
- So far, ministries' requests could be considered if they gave valid justification for the need to issue a global tender and the lack of alternatives within the country.

**Details:**

- As per the latest rules issued by the Cabinet Secretariat and the Finance Ministry, ministries can no longer seek a nod for issuing a global tender unless they have first floated a domestic tender for their requirements, and tried to locate domestic producers in coordination with industry bodies.
- Moreover, departments also cannot submit exemption proposals unless they have first published their procurement plan for the next three and five years on their websites.
  - Publishing a procurement plan was mandated by the Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade ([DPIIT](#)) in September 2020 through a Public Procurement (Preference to Make in India) order.

**Note:**

However, a blanket exemption to allow global tenders was recently granted for procurement of spare parts from foreign original equipment manufacturers after multiple departments and public sector firms raised concerns about the lack of domestic options.

## D. GS 4 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## E. Editorials

### Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

#### 1. Diplomatic offensive

The article talks about the steps taken by India to highlight the terror threat from Pakistan, in the backdrop of the Nagrota encounter.

##### Background:

- Indian security forces recently defeated a nefarious plot to target grassroots level democratic exercises in Jammu and Kashmir by killing four terrorists belonging to the Pakistan-based terrorist organisation Jaish-e-Mohammad.
  - District Development Council elections are due to start in Jammu and Kashmir.

##### Details:

- More details have been uncovered on the planned terror strike in Jammu and Kashmir by four men, believed to be members of the Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammed.
- The government believes that the recent attack was planned on the same scale as the Pulwama bombing that killed 40 Central Reserve Police Force personnel.
- The attack is believed to be timed for the anniversary of the [2008 Mumbai attacks](#).
- Also, a tunnel has been discovered in the Samba sector from where the men are supposed to have infiltrated into India.

##### Steps taken by India to highlight the terror threat from Pakistan:

- The government of India has decided to step up its diplomatic campaign to hold Pakistan accountable.
- The Foreign Secretary briefed a select group of ambassadors on the plot.
  - The envoys were part of the first batch of diplomats being briefed.
- Indian missions have been instructed to pass on details of the “information docket” handed over, which includes details of the encounter in Nagrota between the suspected terrorists hiding in a truck and security forces, as well as the equipment the men allegedly had.

##### Significance:

- By apprising the international community of the details of the Nagrota encounter, the government seems to have a multi-pronged strategy.

- The first imperative is to ensure that the full implications of the aborted attack and what could have occurred are understood worldwide.
- Secondly, India wants to ensure that the threat it continues to face from cross-border terror is acknowledged.
- India aims to put Pakistan, which has itself been making allegations about a terror threat from India, squarely on notice.
  - It is important to note that Pakistan still faces the final [FATF](#) decision in February 2021 on whether it will be blacklisted.
  - Pakistan can be blacklisted for its inability to curb terror financing and to shut down groups such as the JeM and the LeT.
- It is opined that the government of Pakistan would be better positioned in fulfilling the action plan it has been tasked with rather than flashing unsubstantiated dossiers with counter-claims against India.

### **Way forward:**

- India must note that invoking the international community can be a double-edged sword in its bilateral conflict with Pakistan, that could invite discomfiting interventionary interest.
- Eventually, India's success lies in protecting its borders, as done in Nagrota, and by providing a peaceful and stable environment in J&K so as to restart the much-delayed democratic process despite all attempts to derail it.

## **Category: ECONOMY**

### **1. Dangerous Suggestions**

#### **Context:**

The article talks about the suggestions by the Internal Working Group of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

#### **Details:**

- The panel was tasked with reviewing ownership norms and corporate structure for private sector banks.
- It has made worthwhile suggestions including ways to harmonise licensing norms for all banks including older legacy lenders and newer entrants.
- While the panel's appointment in June — at a time when the country was in the throes of coping with the severe economic fallout of the COVID-19 lockdown — got little attention, its suggestion that corporate or industrial houses be allowed to promote banks has triggered widespread concern. And among those with reservations are at least three former senior central bankers and a global credit rating agency.

Read more on other recommendations by the RBI working group covered in [21<sup>st</sup> November 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis](#).

### **2. Say 'no' to corporate houses in Indian banking**

#### **Context:**



An Internal Working Group of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recommended that corporate houses be given bank licences.

This topic has been covered in the [24<sup>th</sup> November 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis](#).

## F. Prelims Facts

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## G. Tidbits

### 1. Jail term, fine for 'unlawful' religious conversions in U.P.

#### What's in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government has given its nod to U.P. Unlawful Religious Conversion Prohibition Ordinance, 2020.

- The ordinance that makes religious conversion a non-bailable offence inviting penalties up to 10 years in prison if found to be effected for marriage or through misrepresentation, force, undue influence, coercion, allurement or other allegedly fraudulent means.
  - Violation of the provisions of the law would invite a jail term of not less than one year extendable to five years with a fine of ₹15,000.
  - If a minor woman or a woman from the Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribes communities was converted through the said unlawful means, the jail term would be a minimum of three years and could be extended to 10 years with a fine of ₹25,000.
- The ordinance also lays down strict action, including cancellation of registration of social organisations conducting mass conversions.
  - Mass conversions would invite a jail term of not less than three years up to 10 years and a fine of ₹50,000, reads the operative statement on the ordinance.
  - In case of conversion done by a woman for the sole purpose of marriage, the marriage would be declared null and void.
- The burden to prove that conversion was not done through misrepresentation would be on the person converting or those who facilitated it.
- A person seeking to convert to another religion for marriage would have to inform the district magistrate two months prior to it through a prescribed form.

## H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements with respect to tropical cyclones:

1. More cyclones are formed in the Bay of Bengal than the Arabian Sea.
2. Cyclones gain their energy from the heat and moisture generated from warm ocean surfaces.
3. From the centre of a cyclonic storm, pressure increases outwards.

Which of the given statement/s is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 and 3 only

- c. 1, 2 and 3
- d. 1 and 2 only

**CHECK ANSWERS:-**

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

- More cyclones are formed in the Bay of Bengal than the Arabian Sea due to wind patterns (that keep oceans cooler on the western side).
- Cyclones gain their energy from the heat and moisture generated from warm ocean surfaces.
- From the centre of a cyclonic storm, pressure increases outwards.
- The amount of the pressure drop in the centre and the rate at which it increases outwards give the intensity of the cyclones and the strength of winds.

**Q2. Consider the following statements with respect to POSHAN Abhiyaan:**

1. The scheme aims at improving the nutritional outcomes of adolescents, children, pregnant women and lactating mothers.
2. The programme has specific targets for reducing stunting, anaemia, under-nutrition and low birth weight.
3. The chairman of NITI Aayog is the chairperson of the National Council on Nutrition set up under the mission.

**Which of the given statement/s is/are INCORRECT?**

- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 3 only
- c. 1 and 3 only
- d. None of the above

**CHECK ANSWERS:-**

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

- Poshan Abhiyaan is India's flagship scheme to improve the nutritional outcomes of adolescents, children, pregnant women and lactating mothers.
- The term 'Poshan' in the name of the programme stands for 'Prime Minister's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nutrition'.
- The programme has specific targets for reducing stunting, anaemia, under-nutrition and low birth weight.
- The National Council on India's Nutritional Challenges, which has been set up under the Poshan Abhiyaan, has the Vice Chairperson of NITI Aayog as its Chairperson. The council is also called the National Council on Nutrition or NCN.

**Q3. Consider the following statements:**

1. National Stock Exchange is Asia's first stock exchange.
2. Sensex is India's benchmark stock index that represents 30 of the largest and most well-capitalized stocks on the National Stock Exchange.



Which of the given statement/s is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

**CHECK ANSWERS:-**

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:**

- The [Bombay Stock Exchange was founded on July 9, 1875](#). It is Asia's first stock exchange.
- The National Stock Exchange was founded in 1992. It was recognized as a stock exchange by SEBI under the Securities Contracts (Regulation) Act, 1956 and the operation commenced in 1994.
- Sensex refers to India's benchmark stock index, which was created in 1986 and represents 30 of the largest and most well-capitalized stocks on the BSE.

**Q4. "Lachit Borphukan" is associated with which of the following?**

- a. Battle of Saraighat
- b. Gorkha War
- c. First Anglo-Burmese War
- d. Moplah Rebellion

**CHECK ANSWERS:-**

**Answer: a**

**Explanation:**

- 24th November is observed as Lachit Diwas in Assam in honour of Lachit Borphukan to commemorate his heroism and the victory of the Assamese army at the Battle of Saraighat.
- Lachit Borphukan was a commander in the Ahom dynasty, located in present-day Assam.
- He showed exemplary leadership in the Battle of Saraighat (1671).
- The Battle of Saraighat was a naval battle fought between the Mughal Empire and the Ahom Kingdom.

## I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Is the time ripe for granting bank licenses to corporate houses in India? Substantiate your answer. (GS 3 Economy) (15 Marks, 250 Words).
2. Discuss the security challenges and the problems faced by India in resisting infiltration or bringing it to a minimum level along the international borders. What are the steps taken by the government in this regard? (GS 2 International Relations) (10 Marks, 150 Words).

